

Remarks

This Amendment responds to the Office Action mailed November 16, 2005. Claims 1-20 are pending.

Response to Formality Matters

The assistance of the Examiner in correcting typographical errors in the Information Disclosure Statement and pointing out several other items requiring correction is noted with appreciation. A substitute oath and declaration including a date of execution will be submitted under separate cover. The specification is amended to add the designated reference number to the AC/DC converter. No new matter is entered by this change since it is obvious that the AC/DC converter referenced on page 9 of the specification is the same one shown in Fig. 4 and designated in that figure by reference number 68.

Remarks on Amendments

The claim amendments are made to enhance coverage and not to limit the claims in response to any prior art rejections. Claims 1, 2 and 16 are amended to broaden their language, particularly with regard to the type of interruption and how the timer finishes its count. Claims 7 and 12 are amended to recite additional, independently patentable features included in some embodiments of the invention. Claim 20 is rewritten in independent form (incorporating the changes in claim 16) to make it ready for allowance.

Response to Prior Art Rejections

Independent claim 1 and dependent claims 2-3, 5-6, 8, 12 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C 103 based on the combination of U.S. Patent 5,231,310 to Oh and U.S. Patent 4,246,495 to Pressman. Independent claim 16, as well as dependent claims 4, 7, 10-11, 13, 16-17 and 19, were rejected based on the combination of Oh and Pressman, with the further addition of U.S. Patent 5,283,475 to Berger. Dependent claim 9 was rejected based on the combination of Oh, Pressman, and U.S. Patent 6,777,828 to Rothstein. Dependent claim 20 was rejected based on the combination of Oh, Pressman, Berger, and U.S. Patent 4,147,978 to Hicks.

Each of these rejections is respectfully traversed, and reconsideration is requested based on the following remarks.

Independent claims 1 and 16 recite, among other things,

...a first counter for counting down to zero time from a time greater than zero time set into the first counter, means connected to the first counter for setting a time into the first counter, a second counter for counting up in response to the sensed on condition of the electrical apparatus, a display for displaying the count of the first or second counter and a switch connected between the display and the first and second counters for selecting the count of one of the first and second counters to be displayed....

Thus, each of the pending claims recite two counters, one that counts up and one that counts down, with a display and a switch for selecting the counter that is to be displayed, in the context of a timing device that times operation of an electrical apparatus.

The specific combination of these different timing features, in the claimed context, and with a switch to permit convenient viewing of either a countdown or elapsed operating time, is not taught or suggested by the prior art references relied upon in the Office Action. The Oh patent shows a device with an electronic countdown timer. The Pressman reference shows a

device with a mechanical dial that shows total accumulated daily usage of a television. There is no specific suggestion in either reference that it would be desirable to create a device with these two different types of timers integrated therein. Further, there is no suggestion in these references that these two different types of timers to connect both timers to a display using a switch that allows displaying either timer on the display, in the manner recited in the claims.

The combination of these two references does not provide a prima facie case of obviousness, in that combining the teachings of the references does not actually result in the claimed invention. These different devices cannot be directly and functionally combined--one uses a synchronous motor to turn a dial and one is electronic. Further, even if these different devices were combined in the same unit, these structures would have two different display methods, not a switch to control which timer is displayed as recited in the claims. There is no teaching of a display switch in the context of this type of device in any of the references relied upon.

The recited features also provide significant unobvious advantages that are not suggested in the noted references. In particular, with the claimed structure it is possible to provide a multifunctional device at minimal manufacturing cost. A timer with an accumulated operating time function is provided, to facilitate tracking of usage time, such as for cost limiting purposes, while a timer with a countdown function (that in some embodiments turns off the device when the counter finishes) to impose firm operating time limits for the apparatus when the owner or parent is not present. Thus the device is capable of serving different functions, and a single display provided for the two timers can selectively provide either of two operating modes. There is no specific language in the references relied upon in the Office Action that would suggest to a

person of ordinary skill that this *particular combination of structures and features* should be provided. For this reason, reconsideration of the pending rejections is appropriate.

The dependent claims are believed to be patentable for the reasons noted above, and also because they recite independently patentable subject matter. The rejections applied to the dependent claims and the assertions in the Official Action with regard to obviousness are respectfully traversed, but applicant will not address each of the assertions in detail since these claims are patentable by virtue of the patentability of the independent claims.

Applicant notes, however, that claim 20 recites a third operating mode, in which the display provides a total cost of electricity used by the electrical apparatus connected to the timer. Five references were combined in the rejection applied to this claim. It is respectfully submitted that the addition of the Hicks reference, which merely shows an electrical metering device, does not provide any motivation that would have taught a person of ordinary skill in this art to create the three-mode device recited in claim 20. Claim 20 is therefore believed to be ready for allowance.

Dependent claims 7 and 12, as amended, recite a device that is capable of interrupting connections of at least one of a communications network connector and a power connector in response to completion of a count. While cited prior art devices can interrupt power, or a network connector, applicant believes that the capacity to interrupt both power and network connections in the same device is novel and unobvious.

Conclusion

Applicant submits that the pending rejections are overcome by the amendments and

remarks herein. Reconsideration of the rejections is requested on that basis, and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited. If a telephone or personal conference would expedite prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned, who will cooperate appropriately to advance the case.

Please charge any deficiency in fees, or credit any overpayment thereof, to BLANK ROME LLP, Deposit Account No. 23-2185 (119299-00101). In the event that a petition for an extension of time is required to render this submission timely, Applicant hereby petitions under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) for such an extension for as many months as are required to render this submission timely, and request that the PTO charge the extension fee to the deposit account as authorized above.

Respectfully submitted,



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